

In the mid-1980s I served as the Republican Staff Director of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families. I visited numerous creative character education programs across this nation including in St. Louis, Miami and Baltimore.

Each school system had involved the local community in the development of their program. Each was having a positive impact on the students in their schools. And, importantly, each program was done differently. It is important that we continue to encourage such creative flexibility.

Currently, there are a number of character education efforts in my district in northeastern Indiana. One of the best is a program called "Character Counts" which I have discussed with Garrett-Keyser-Butler Community School system superintendent Alan Middleton, as well as others in the Garrett system.

We need to encourage efforts to implement such programs. By allowing—leaving it up to the school districts themselves but allowing—teacher training to include character education training is an important advance for character education. Congressman FLETCHER's amendment made it clear that funds can be used for such training.

What follows is some basic information from the Garrett community school system's "Character Counts" program, which gives some idea of the approach of one character education initiative. It is important to note the emphasis on community participation as well as the specific themes that are stressed.

What? The Character Counts! Coalition is a national partnership of organizations and individuals involved in the education, training and care of youth. They have joined in a collaborative effort to improve the character of America's young people based on six basic standards of character.

Six pillars of character: Trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, fairness, caring, citizenship.

The Garrett-Keyser-Butler School Corporation this last year became a member of the national CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition. The program's development was based on a 1992 summit meeting of educators, youth leaders, religious leaders and ethicists who worked together to identify those basic characteristics that they could all agree on as being essential to the development of good character. These became known as the Six Pillars of Character.

The CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition hopes to combat violence, irresponsibility and dishonesty while strengthening the character of the next generation. The program is not associated with any particular religion or ideological agenda other than that of promoting good character through ethical decision making.

The membership list includes many well respected national organizations such as American Red Cross, the United Way of America, USA Police Activities League, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, 4-H, Little League Baseball, YMCA of the USA, the National Association of State Boards of Education and National Association of Secondary School Principals to mention a few.

We at the GKB School Corporation have made a commitment to work through the CHARACTER COUNTS! program in an effort to improve the character of our young people.

We believe that CHARACTER COUNTS! in personal relationships, in school, at the workplace, and in life. Who you are makes a difference!

Mission Statement: The Garrett-Keyser-Butler School Corp., is committed to the de-

velopment of a program which unites the whole community in promoting trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. We believe these ethical traits are essential for the success of young people in all areas of their life—in school, work, and personal relationships.

The Coalition is comprised of about 100 national and regional organizations that together reach more than 40 million young people.

Coalition includes: YMCA, BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS, 4-H, BIG BROTHERS/SISTERS, ATSO, LITTLE LEAGUE, RED CROSS, BOYS TOWN, NAT'L ASS'N OF POLICE, ATHLETIC LEAGUES, U.S. SOCCER ASSN., AFT, NEA, NAT'L ASS'N OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, NAT'L ASS'N OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION, NAT'L ASS'N OF STUDENT COUNCILS, NAT'L CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASS'N, AARP, LA RAZA, INTERNATIONAL ASS'N OF POLICE CHIEFS, NAT'L URBAN LEAGUE AND UNITED WAY.

TRIBUTE TO REV. LEROY BELLAMY

HON. KAREN L. THURMAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 1999

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Reverend Leroy Bellamy, a dear friend and senior pastor at Grace Temple Church of God in Floral City, FL.

For 40 years, the Reverend Bellamy has touched the lives of many Citrus County residents through gospel and prayer. He has worked hard over the years to build trust in the community and to inspire his congregations. Achieving that was not always easy, but he followed his heart and answered his calling.

Reverend Bellamy was the first minister of color in Citrus County to participate in interdenominational and inter-racial community religious and social activities. At a time when many residents believed separate was better, Reverend Bellamy challenged that notion and encouraged the community to worship and pray together.

The annual sunrise Easter service in Citrus County is proof of Reverend Bellamy's commitment to racial tolerance.

Each year, parishioners of different racial and ethnic backgrounds sit side by side in a packed stadium to listen to his inspiring sermons. The 86-year-old pastor prides himself on never having missed a sunrise service. The service is one of many ways this unassuming and humble man shows those around him that building bridges is God's answer to burning them. That working to bring people together—regardless of race, color, sex, religion or social class—is the right thing to do.

The people of Citrus County have listened carefully over the years to Reverend Bellamy's wise words. As a special way to thank him, the community is hosting a "Reverend Leroy Bellamy Day" in his honor on July 31st.

This is one of many times the pastor has been recognized for his service to the community. Reverend Bellamy and his late wife Priscilla were selected Citrus County's Family of the Year in 1992. He was also given a "Key to the City" in Inverness and lives on a road in Inverness bearing his name.

As you can tell, we're very proud to have Reverend Bellamy in our community. He's the epitome of goodness and righteousness. He grew up in Florida during a time when economic depression and racial isolation made life hard for many people. But, as a young man, Reverend Bellamy followed God's path and shunned bitterness and anger.

He often juggled several manual-labor jobs to provide for his 10 children: Leroy Jr., Randolph, Lonnie, James, Clarence, Curtis, Bruce, Gilbert, Nina, and Lucille. In later years, he went to work for himself in the hog-farming business and prospered. He saved his earnings and sent several of his children to college—an opportunity that was not available to him.

Like so many other upstanding Americans, Reverend Bellamy started within his own family to make life better for future generations. His grandson Patrick Thomas is a dedicated caseworker in one of my Florida district offices. Patrick says his grandfather always stressed upon his children and grandchildren, the importance of self-discipline, education and respect for oneself and others. Most of all, the Reverend Bellamy taught his children and parishioners to have faith and trust in God. This, the Reverend says, is the most important lesson. The lesson that shapes a lifetime. The lesson that opens Heaven's gates.

Through his ministry, the Reverend Bellamy lifts the spirits of people in prisons, hospitals and nursing homes. He grieves with families at funerals, brings couples together in holy matrimony and celebrates life's simple pleasures at parades and other county festivities.

We are forever grateful to the Reverend Bellamy for leading a life dedicated to God's work and for choosing to make Citrus County his home. His smile brings hope and joy to the troubled. His prayers strengthen wearied hearts. His words of comfort console those in need.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in paying tribute to the Reverend Leroy Bellamy, a man who credits his good life to his commitment to God. May Citrus County be blessed with the Rev. Bellamy's divine presence and spiritual leadership for many more years to come.

CARRIE P. MEEK'S TRIBUTE TO REV. DR. G. DAVID HORTON, PASTOR, GREATER NEW BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 1999

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is truly a distinct honor and privilege to pay tribute to one of Miami-Dade County's great ecclesiastical leaders, the Rev. Dr. G. David Horton, on his 20th Year Anniversary as Pastor of Greater New Bethel Baptist Church. I want to echo the same sentiments of joy and gratitude that his congregation is lifting up to Almighty God to celebrate his milestone during this month of July, culminating on Sunday, August 1, 1999.

Rev. Dr. Horton truly represents the best and the noblest of God's Chosen Ones. As pastor, preacher and minister of the Gospel, he is remarkably leading his congregation in the ways of God and has tirelessly worked to